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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 000546

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SUBJECT: "Media: Baku Complicates Turco-Armenian Normalization,  
Ergenekon Targets Intellectuals."

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009

In Today's Papers

Turkey Can't Leave Azerbaijan High and Dry (Yeni Safak)  
Media continue to digest the regional ramifications of opening the border between Turkey and Armenia. Today Islamist media is particularly interested in how the Azeri side and how the Armenian side views the effects such a move could have on the geopolitical dynamics of the southern Caucasus. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports "Azeris can't understand the tensions between Ankara and Baku and Azerbaijanis think Turkey can't leave Azerbaijan high and dry," as "some believe there are those who want to drive a wedge between Turkey and Azerbaijan," but "the Azeri side is sure that Turkey is their brother country." In addition, Yeni Safak says "Former presidential advisor Vafa Guluzade says the Kremlin suggests Armenia should withdraw its forces from Azeri regions so Russia can send in peacekeeping troops to the area." Meanwhile, Islamist-oriented Zaman reports "Armenian officials say that 99 percent of the Armenian public supports the opening of the border." Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Turkey Could Lose Azerbaijan" that "Azeri parliamentarians are in Ankara to make a valuable warning regarding the Turkey-Armenia border opening." Cumhuriyet says the Azeri parliamentarians are in Ankara to give messages that "U.S. interests could be in danger," as "Azerbaijan could play its strategic card," and "They want to ruin our relations" and "Turkey must use it's own cards in it's own hand," as "Russia is on the lookout for an opportunity" to expand its influence in the Caucasus by its offer to send Russian peacekeepers to Ngorno Karabakh.

In a related article, Cumhuriyet also notes "secret negotiations have taken place between Turkey and Armenia since 2007 in which such topics as the border crossing and trade were discussed." The paper says, "after Obama's call to normalize relations," there is now "a packet that is being formulated by lower level diplomats in order to proceed with the normalization of ties between Turkey and Armenia and at the same time seek a resolution to the Karabakh issue by pushing for a withdrawal of Armenian forces."

In Armenia, All Eyes Are On the Border with Turkey (Zaman)  
Islamist-oriented Zaman reports from Yerevan regarding the "mood of Armenians" on the controversial issue of the reopening of the border crossing with Turkey. All Armenians encountered by the Zaman reporter told him they felt the border with Turkey should be opened, with most of them saying they want to visit Turkey after the border is opened. However, Zaman says the same people think Turkey won't open the border before the Karabakh question is resolved. Zaman notes the elder generation is more cautious regarding relations with Turkey while young Armenians show they are ready to break the historic taboos against relations with Turkey. Two young women, Susan (17) and Hasmik (23) said they had no prejudice against Turkey, stressing that peace would lead the way to exchanges, visits and even marriages between the two peoples. "Even the military and intelligence officials anticipate in excitement for the opening of the border. When asked, officials say 99 percent of Armenians want the border to be opened," says Zaman.

#### Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia-Iran

Fikret Ertan wrote in Islamic-oriented Zaman: "The ties between Iran and Armenia are improving gradually in many fields. The leaders of the both countries are meeting quite often to strengthen and improve their relationship. Within this framework, Iranian Foreign Minister Muttaki paid a visit to Yerevan last March. Armenian President Serzh Sargsian went to Tehran yesterday to improve cooperation between the two countries in every field, including the economy. Moreover, it was claimed that during this visit, Sargsian will sign a memorandum of understanding with Iran

ANKARA 00000546 002 OF 004

for the 470 km-long railway construction to connect the two countries. In addition to the railway construction, Armenia and Iran are working on a feasibility project to build hydro-electric plants and railways on the both sides of Aras river, negotiating for a oil pipeline and refinery, and a high power electricity line to connect the two countries' electricity network. The bilateral trade rate between the two countries increased last year 26 percent and reached \$230 million. This is the latest picture of the relations between Armenia and Iran, which Turkey also should follow it closely."

The PKK Declares Unilateral Ceasefire until June (Taraf)  
Leftist Taraf reports on its front page that the PKK has announced it will extend its current ceasefire until June; the paper also notes the PKK statement mentioned the ceasefire appears to have ushered in an era of peace. Taraf notes the statement said, "Because the Turkish military is largely respecting the ceasefire, an era of peace has prevailed throughout Turkey," and the statement "called on all groups related to the Kurdish question to support efforts for a democratic solution." The statement also asked international actors, namely the U.S., to take a role in the resolution of the Kurdish problem.

Taraf also reports Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP party board said in a meeting over the weekend the Kurdish question cannot be resolved without taking into account the PKK's imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan. The DTP defends the PKK must be represented at the international Kurdish conference to be held in Erbil, says Taraf.

Obama Shocks Patriarch Bartholomew I (Milliyet)  
Mainstream Milliyet and liberal Radikal report Greek newspapers claim that in his Istanbul meeting with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I, President Obama said the Greek side must "respond" to a possible reopening of the Halki Seminary by taking new initiatives concerning the rights of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Obama told Bartholomew I the matter was raised by President Gul during a meeting with the U.S. President in Ankara last week. Milliyet cites the Greek daily TaNea as reporting, "It was confirmed that Obama supports the Turkish thesis on the Halki Seminary." Etnos is cited as saying, "Rahm Emanuel also told Bartholomew I Greece must take initiatives regarding the education and religious rights of the minorities in Western Thrace in order for the Halki Seminary to be reopened."

Obama's First Decisive Military Victory

Many media outlets praise U.S. President Barack Obama for giving the order to rescue the American captain who was being held hostage by Somali pirates. However, some warn the pirates are now threatening all out war against the U.S. in response. Mainstream Hurriyet hails the victory over the pirates as "Obama's First Military Victory" and the paper applauds the "Sharp Marksmanship" of the Navy Seals, who struck the pirates and ended the standoff. Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "Obama's First Military Victory" and notes "Obama Did What Sarkozy Couldn't," in a reference to the French commando raid Friday in which a French citizen was killed during the rescue operation. Mainstream Vatan reports "Obama Gave the Order and Three Pirates Were Struck Down." Liberal Radikal headlines, "Somali Pirates Declare War Against the U.S." after "Obama gave the order to strike and American Captain Philips was saved" and thus "Obama passed his first test" with the pirates. Leftist Taraf notes, "while Captain Richard Phillips was being rescued from Somali pirates," another drama was unfolding as "U.S. Representative Donald Payne's plane was fired upon as he departed Mogadishu."

Obama Confirms His Message to the Muslim World Came from Ankara (Yeni Safak)

In "I Gave My Message to Muslims from Ankara," Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports "President Obama told participants in a Easter and Passover celebration at the White House that he gave his message of trust and cooperation to the Muslim world when he spoke to the

ANKARA 00000546 003 OF 004

Turkish parliament and to Turkish students."

Minister Ekren: Turkish Economy Expected to Contract by 3.6 Percent in 2009

Papers report Deputy Prime Minister Nazim Ekren said Monday the Turkish economy is expected to contract by 3.6 percent in 2009. The ruling AKP government had earlier forecasted four percent growth. Unemployment for 2009 is projected as 13.5 percent. Ekren added that the economy is expected to grow by 3.3 percent in 2010 and 4.5 percent in 2011. Business daily Referans says the AKP government has finally "acknowledged the existence of the global economic crisis."

Latest Wave of Ergenekon Detentions Target Modern Life (Milliyet)  
Media outlets report "academics" were targeted in the latest wave of the 'Ergenekon' detentions on Monday, with five professors taken into custody. Papers report variations in the number of detentions during raids in 18 provinces, from 43 to 60. Baskent University rector Professor Mehmet Haberal and Giresun University rector Professor Osman Metin Ozturk were detained in addition to three other former university rectors. Professor Erol Manisali, a columnist for leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet daily, was also been taken into custody. Professor Mehmet Haberal is the founder of Baskent University, Baskent Hospital, Patalya Hotel and Kanal B television, a channel strongly critical of the AKP government. Islamist-oriented Zaman claims the academics taken into custody yesterday "have held meetings with the generals and the Ergenekon leaders who were planning to make Haberal president following a military takeover." Mainstream papers emphasize that all the academics taken into custody yesterday were known to be secular-minded, pro-Ataturk names who opposed the Islamic-style headscarf in universities. Leftist Taraf, however, says the suspects taken into custody yesterday were "academics in military boots."

The police also searched the branches of the Association for Supporting Modern Life (CYDD), and detained several prominent association representatives. A front page headline in mainstream Milliyet says "The Target is Modern Life." Milliyet notes the CYDD was known for extending a helping hand to girls to advance their education, and also for its activities in support of secularism. Liberal Radikal warns that "the Ergenekon raids will deal a blow on the activities of the voluntary education organizations." "We have 29,000 university students and 36,000 school girls on scholarship. Our data disks containing their names and personal identification information were confiscated. The students will not be able to receive their stipends this month," the head of the CYDD, Professor Turkan Saylan, said. Mainstream Hurriyet says together with the Modern Education Foundation (CEV), the CYDD was accused of

involvement in "Christian missionary activities in Turkey." Gulseven Yaser, the president of CEV, was also taken into custody. Students given scholarships by the two organizations reportedly have become the "target of Christian propaganda." Papers report both organizations were charged with receiving support from Protestant foundations in Europe and the U.S. The police say the two "suspicious foundations" were receiving financial support from the American Board and were "coordinating missionary activities in Turkey."

In reaction to yesterday's detentions, the main opposition CHP lawmaker Kemal Kilicdaroglu said, "This operation was staged against the intellectuals of this country." Opposition MHP deputy group chief Mehmet Sandir said the waves of Ergenekon detentions are "arranged to distract the attention of the public" from other problems facing the ruling AKP government.

#### Editorial Commentary on Turkey-EU

Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: The AKP government has initiated efforts to diversify Turkey's foreign policy since 2002.

ANKARA 00000546 004 OF 004

The architect of this new era is Ahmet Davutoglu and the initial goal of his approach was EU membership. However, since 2005, Turkey has stumbled aimlessly and today bears no ideological resemblance to Turkey's prior foreign policy, instead Turkey appears as if it is trying to get closer to the Middle East than the EU. In this era, Turkish foreign policy's organizational structure looks rather strange. No one takes Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, nick named "baby-can", seriously. Davutoglu, together with his team and President Gul, fulfill the Foreign Minister's duties. Moreover, PM Erdogan's outburst at the World Economic Forum in Davos caused the EU to question its trust in Turkey. Recently, French Foreign Minister Kouchner openly stressed that he is against Turkey's EU membership because "Turkey is moving away from secularism and towards an Islamic state." This statement was no mere political commentary, but more like a serious warning to Turkey. Therefore, now Davutoglu should exert extra efforts to move Turkey towards the EU instead of towards the Middle East.

Temel Iskit of leftist Taraf writes, "While Merkel and Sarkozy are right to react to Obama's support for Turkey's EU entry, Obama's approach is not wrong," even though "Erdogan is complicating Turkey's EU aspirations by not opening Halki Seminary and by not opening the border with Armenia until the Ngorno Karabakh issue is solved." Iskit notes, "the keys to saving ourselves today lie in our own hands - the only way for us to move forward is to through EU membership and Obama's vision and it's not about what the EU or the U.S. wants, its about what we will see in our own future."

#### TV News (CNN Turk)

##### Domestic

- Prime Ministry sources deny Armenian press reports that PM Erdogan was planning to go to Moscow on April 16 to join a meeting of the presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan to discuss the Nagorno Karabakh question.

- On Wednesday, an international symposium sponsored by the Turkish Parliament and The World Bank on parliamentary oversight and external audit will be held in Ankara.

- Former prime minister Necmettin Erbakan is in Iran to meet President Ahmadinejad, religious leader Khamenei and former president Rafsanjani on behalf of the Islamist Saadet Partisi (SP).

- Kurdish singer Rojin quits a show she hosted on the state-owned broadcaster TRT's Kurdish-language channel TRT-6, saying TRT administration intervened in all the details of her program.

##### World

- The New York Times writes during his visit to Turkey last week,

President Obama steered away from the 'poisonous post-9/11 clash of civilizations mythology' that drove so much of President Bush's rhetoric and policy.

- An op-ed in the Financial Times warns the Turkish government to use "quiet and responsible diplomacy" instead of adopting a brash tone on the world stage.

- Greek Cyprus leader Demetris Christofias says he was "not happy" with the progress made so far in the reunification talks.

JEFFREY